

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 993
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJECT: BY ELECTION CAMPAIGNS FOCUSING ON LOCAL ISSUES AND
PERSONALITIES

REF: QUEBEC 0172

1. ELEVEN DAYS BEFORE ELECTION, TWO FEDERAL BY ELECTION CAMPAIGNS
IN QUEBEC CITY AREA HAVE NOT GENERATED ENOUGH ACTIVITY TO EMERGE
FROM SHADOW OF LANGUAGE DEBATE OVER GOQ'S BILL ONE. THIS IS
NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING AS LOCAL CANDIDATES AND MANY NATIONAL LEADERS
HAVE BEEN QUITE ACTIVE. RATHER, IT APPEARS THAT NO SINGLE FOCUS HAS YET

DEVELOPED. GIVEN THE LOCAL NATURE OF THE CONTESTS UP TO NOW,
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT NO ISSUE WILL DEVELOP ENOUGH STEAM TO GIVE
ELECTIONS "MINI-REFERENDUM" IMPORTANCE MANY ONCE THOUGHT THEY
WOULD HAVE. IN BOTH LANGEIER AND LOUIS HEBERT LIBERALS STILL
FIGURE TO HOLD SEATS BUT SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE RACES COULD
BE CLOSE. HOWEVER, ONE WELL CONNECTED LOCAL TORY TOLD ME IN
CONFIDENCE THAT PARTY LEADERS INCLUDING JOE CLARK CONSIDER THEIR
CHANCES SLIM OF WINNING ANY OF 5 SEATS BEING CONTESTED IN QUEBEC.
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WM IN LANGEIER'S WORKING CLASS DISTRICT WHERE AVERAGE ANNUAL
WAGE IS ONLY \$7,600, TORIES ARE TRYING TO TOPPLE QUEBEC CITY
MAJOR GILLES LAMONTAGNE. THEIR CANDIDATE, MAURICE HAMEL,
HAS BEEN JOINED BY FIVE MINOR CANDIDATES IN HIS EFFORT HOLD LAMONTAGNE

RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS MUNICIPAL POLICIES. WHILE ONLY CONSERVATIVES

ARE GIVEN A SLIGHT CHANCE TO PULL AN UPSET, OTHER FIVE HAVE NOTHING TO

LOSE BY FOLLOWING PC LEAD AND HAVE DECLARED OPEN SEASON ON LAMONTAGNE, GIVING THIS CAMPAIGN AURA OF A MUNICIPAL CONTEST RATHER THAN A FEDERAL ELECTION. HAMEL LIVES IN LANGELIER AND DESCRIBES SELF AS MAN OF PEOPLE IN HIS LITERATURE. HE CLAIMS LANGELIER'S SUFFERING THE WORST EFFECTS OF THE GENERAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

IN QUEBEC. HE ESTIMATES HALF OF RIDING'S 34,000 VOTERS ARE EITHER UNEMPLOYED, ON WELFARE OR CONSIDERED UNDERPRIVILEGED IN TERMS OF DECENT HOUSING. HE IS COURTING PARTI QUEBECOIS VOTERS AS TORIES HOPE TO REPEAT HOCHELAGA (MONTREAL, 1975) STRATEGY.

3. DECLARING HIMSELF A FEDERALIST WHO ABHORS EXTREME POSITIONS, LAMONTAGNE HAS FOUND THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO CREATE ANY IMPACT BY STRESSING NATIONAL UNITY THEME IN LANGELIER. HE NOW PREFERS TO STRESS LOCAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. HIS THEMES INCLUDE HOUSING, THE HISTORIC RESTORATION OF OLD QUEBEC, AND THE EXPANSION OF QUEBEC'S PORT TO HELP EASE CRITICAL UNEMPLOYMENT. MAYOR FEELS HE IS NOT UNPOPULAR AND THAT HIS OVERSEEING OF A MODERN CONSTRUCTION BOOM DURING HIS 12 YEAR TENURE WILL NOT HURT HIM. ONLY SOCIAL CREDIT CANDIDATE SAUVEUR FRADETTE BEARS WATCHING AMONG MINOR CANDIDATES. SOCRED WON THIS SEAT IN 1962 BUT THEIR VOTE HAS BEEN STEADILY DROPPING SINCE THEN. THEY GARNERED ONLY 15 PERCENT IN 1974. MANY CONSIDER LANGELIER AN IMPORTANT TEST FOR ANDRE FORTIN'S LEADERSHIP--UNDER SERIOUS CHALLENGE THIS WEEK--AS HE MUST STOP THIS ATTRITION IN A DISTRICT WHICH--BY MAKE UP--SHOULD GIVE CREDITISTES A GOOD VOTE.

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RM NEIGHBORING LOUIS-HEBERT RIDING FEATURES AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT RACE, EXCEPT FOR SIMILAR PC EFFORTS TO ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM VOTERS WHO CAST PQ BALLOTS LAST NOVEMBER. ALL OF THE CANDIDATES ARE YOUNG SO RACE IS BEING CALLED ONE OF "YOUTH POWER." LIBERAL DENNIS DAWSON IS 27, PC JEAN LAVOIE IS 36, AND SOCRED IS RUNNING 18 YEAR OLD STUDENT, DANIEL BOULAY. COMMUNIST HERVE FUYET, A YOUNG TEACHER, COMPLETES THE LIST. NDP FAILED TO FIELD A CANDIDATE AFTER JUDGE CLICHE DECLINED TO RUN (SEE REFTTEL). LAVOIE IS FOCUSING ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY IN A RIDING WHICH IS COMPOSED HEAVILY OF PROVINCIAL PUBLIC SERVANTS EARNING SALARIES FAR ABOVE THE \$10,500 CANADIAN AVERAGE. HE IS PORTRAYED AS LOOSE AND CONFIDENT THAT ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN THE BASICLY TWO MAN RACE. ALTHOUGH RIDING HAS PRODUCED OVERWHELMING MARGINS FOR LIBERALS IN PAST AND IS STILL CONSIDERED RELATIVELY SAFE FOR THEM, NO ONE IN LIBERAL CAMP IS OVERCONFIDENT. DAWSON SAYS HE IS JUST CONCENTRATING ON WINNING THE ELECTION. HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE IS THE PRIMARY CONCERN IN LOUIS HEBERT, WITH THE ECONOMY A DISTANT SECOND. HE IS PROMOTING TRUDEAU'S LEADERSHIP QUALITIES ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE, AS HE BELIEVES THE

PRIME MINISTER IS HIS TRUMP CARD. RECENT POLLS HAVE SHOWN THAT
TRUDEAU HAS MAINTAINED HIS POPULARITY WITH THE VOTERS IN THE
RIDING. CONVERSELY, CONSERVATIVES HAVE DONE LITTLE TO EMPHASIZE
EITHER PARTY LABEL OR JOE CLARK. INSTEAD, STRESS IS ON ABILITIES
OF JEAN LAVOIE (WELL-KNOWN IN STE FOY AFTER 12 YEARS AS
RECREATION DIRECTOR) HIMSELF.
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